

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. One person is making a decision that will affect what a hundred million citizens will see. In May the owner decided that the reading of the names of the soldiers who had died in Iraq was "political" so refused to let his stations air the Nightline episode. Now an anti-Kerry propaganda film about events more than 30 years ago is being called "news" so stations are required to air this film two weeks prior to the presidential elections. This is more than the blatant flaunting of FCC and FEC requirements.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. The license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard and a rubber stamp approval.

Thank you.